

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SECTO 04023 01 OF 02 111145Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W
-----111156Z 011781 /42

O R 111054Z MAY 77 ZFF6
FM USDEL SECRETARY IN LONDO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02SECTO 4023

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS) UK
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CARTER'S MEETING WITH SYRIAN
PRESIDENT ASAD

1. ACTION ADDRESSEES MAY, IN THEIR DISCRETION, DRAW ON
FOLLOWING POINTS TO BRIEF HOST GOVERNMENTS ON PRESIDENT
CARTER'S MEETING WITH ASAD AND PRESENT STATUS OF OUR
MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS:

-- MAY 9 MEETING IN GENEVA WITH PRESIDENT ASAD WAS PART OF PRESENT ROUND OF INTENSIVE CONSULTATIONS. PRESIDENT CARTER IS HOLDING WITH KEY MIDDLE EAST LEADERS TO LEARN AT FIRST HAND THEIR VIEWS ON MAIN ISSUES OF MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND TO EXPLORE WHETHER AN AGREED BASIS CAN BE FOUND FOR RE-CONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE LATER THIS YEAR. OUR EFFORTS CONTINUE TO BE DIRECTED TO THAT KEY OBJECTIVE.

-- PRESIDENT CARTER REAFFIRMED THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS IN 1977. AT SAME TIME, HE MADE CLEAR OUR VIEW THAT BEFORE GOING TO GENEVA IT IS IMPORTANT THERE BE SOME PROSPECT THAT PROGRESS ON KEY ISSUES OF A SETTLEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED AT GENEVA, SINCE FAILURE OF GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD INVOLVE SERIOUS RISKS.

-- TO THIS END, THE PRESIDENT EXPLORED IN DEPTH SYRIAN THINKING ON THE CORE ISSUES OF WITHDRAWAL AND BORDERS, A PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT, AND THE NATURE OF PEACE.

-- PRESIDENT ASAD REITERATED SYRIA'S POSITION THAT IN RETURN FOR PEACE THERE MUST BE WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 BORDERS. THIS SHOULD APPLY ALSO IN THE CASE OF JERUSALEM SO FAR AS SOVEREIGNTY IS CONCERNED WITH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS, HOWEVER, FOR FREE ACCESS TO THE HOLY PLACES.

-- PRESIDENT ASAD ARGUED THAT "SECURE BORDERS" IN TERRITORIAL TERMS WAS A MEANINGLESS CONCEPT AND THAT SECURITY FOR BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS WOULD COME WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE AREA TURNED FROM THINKING OF WAR TO CONCENTRATING THEIR ENERGIES ON PEACE AND THE NEW ERA

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OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS WHICH PEACE WOULD BRING.

-- AT THE SAME TIME, PRESIDENT ASAD ACCEPTS THE CONCEPT OF LIMITED, RECIPROCAL DEMILITARIZED ZONES AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER FORCES UNDER UNITED NATIONS' AEGIS ALONG THE BORDERS, AS WELL AS SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER FORMS OF INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES. HE QUESTIONED, HOWEVER, THE UTILITY OF SUCH ARRANGEMENTS AS WATCH STATIONS OR OBSERVATION POSTS IN SMALL, POPULATED AREAS, SUCH AS THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

-- PRESIDENT CARTER STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN GIVING CONFIDENCE TO BOTH SIDES. HE ALSO EXPLAINED AT LENGTH THE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF MOVING TOWARD NORMAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS AS EVIDENCE OF THEIR PEACEFUL INTENTIONS.

-- PRESIDENT ASAD SAID THAT THE END OF BELLIGERENCY MEANT THE CREATION OF A STATE OF PEACE AND OF CONDITIONS IN WHICH RELATIONS MIGHT DEVELOP NATURALLY OVER

TIME. HA DID NOT SEE, HOWEVER. HOW SUCH THINGS AS
TRADE AND TRAVEL ACROSS BORDERS COULD BE INCLUDED IN
A PEACE SETTLEMENT' GIVEN THE HISTORY OF SUSPICION AND
HOSTILITY BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS.

-- ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, PRESIDENT ASAD SAID
THERE WERE TWO SEPARATE ASPECTS: FIRST WAS THE QUESTION
OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967, WHICH WAS
PART OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF WITHDRAWAL AND A

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FM USDEL SECRETARY IN LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT; SECOND, THERE WAS THE REFUGEE
PROBLEM. WITH RESPECT TO THE LATTER. ASAD RECOGNIZED
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THAT THIS PRESENTS A COMPLEX SET OF ISSUES WHICH ,EED
FURTHER STUDY, BUT SAID THE STARTING POINT MUST BE THE
UN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR REPATRIATION OR COMPENSA-
TION.

-- AS CONCERNS THE NATURE OF A PALESTINIAN TERRI-
TORIAL SETTLEMENT, ASAD WAS NON-COMMITTAL ON WHETHER
A PALESTINIAN ENTITY (WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS THE WEST
BANK, GAZA AND ARAB JERUSALEM) SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT OR
LINKED WITH JORDAN. HE SUGGESTED THAT THIS WAS IN THE
FIRST INSTANCE A MATTER FOR JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS
TO DISCUSS.

-- ASAD MADE CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE PLO SHOULD
BE INVITED TO A GENEVA CONFERENCE. PRESIDENT CARTER
REVIEWED THE OBSTACLES TO THIS FROM A US VIEWPOINT,
I.E.. THE FACT THAT THE PLO HAS ACCEPTED NEITHER THE
EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL NOR SC RESOLUTION 242. THE PRESI-
DENT URGED THAT THE ARABS CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR A
SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION PROBLEM.
WHICH WOULD PROVIDE A REALISTIC BASIS FOR CONVENING
GENEVA, IN LIGHT OF ISRAEL'S REFUSAL, WHICH THE US
UNDERSTANDS, TO DEAL WITH AN ORGANIZATION WHICH MAINTAINS
THA POSITION THAT ISRAEL SHOULD DISAPPEAR AS A STATE.
PRESIDENT CARTER STRESSED AT THE SAME TIME OUR RECOG-
NITION THAT THE PALESTINIANS DESERVE A HOMELAND OF THEIR
OWN, AND THAT THEIR VIEWS MUST BE HEARD IN THE NEGOTIA-
TING PROCESS.

-- IN SUM, THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASAD, AS ONE
OF THE KEY LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WAS AN IMPORTANT
STEP IN OUR POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS. IT ENABLED
PRESIDANT CARTER TO UNDERSTAND BETTER SYRIAN VIEWS AND
TO UNDERLINE THE ISSUES ON WHICH MORE THOUGHT A,D EFFORT
WILL BE NEEDED IF GENEVA IS TO BE CONVENED WITH PROS-
PECTS FOR SUCCESS. THE MEETING WAS HELD IN AN ATMOS-
PHERE OF CORDIALITY AND FRANKNESS, AND ESTABLISHED
AXCELLANT PERSONAL RAPPORT, WHICH WILL BE OF GREAT
IMPORTANCE IN THE PERIOD AHEAD.

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-- FOLLOWING SECRETARY VANCE'S FORTHCOMING VISIT

TO TEHRAN AND DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
GROMYKO IN GENEVA, PRINCE FAHD WILL VISIT WASHINGTON
TO COMPLETE THIS ROUND OF THE PRESIDENT'S CONSULTATIONS.
THEN, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING ISRAEL'S ELECTIONS,
WE WI/L LOOK FOR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING WITH ,NEW
ISRAELI LEADERSHIP AND ENVISAGE THAT SECRETARY VANCE
WILL MAKE ANOTHAR VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN AN EFFORT
TO HELP THE PARTIES MOVA TOWARD AGREEMENT ON THE BASIS
FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

2. FOR TEL AVIV: THE SECRETARY WILL BRIEF FOREIGN MIN-
ISTER ALLON ON ASAD MEETING DURINQ THEIR LUNCH IN
LONDON ON WED,ESDAY, MAY 11.

J. WE HAVE BRIEFED THE BRITISH IN LONDON.

VANCE

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